

# **Women's Prison and Girls' Reformatory collection S278**

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July 23, 2014

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Books and Manuscripts  
140 North Senate Avenue  
Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204  
317-232-3671

## Table of Contents

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| <u>Summary Information</u> .....        | 3 |
| <u>Historical Note</u> .....            | 4 |
| <u>Scope and Contents</u> .....         | 4 |
| <u>Arrangement</u> .....                | 4 |
| <u>Administrative Information</u> ..... | 5 |
| <u>Controlled Access Headings</u> ..... | 5 |

## Summary Information

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| <b>Repository</b>    | Rare Books and Manuscripts                       |
| <b>Title</b>         | Women's Prison and Girls' Reformatory collection |
| <b>Date</b>          | 1902   |
| <b>Extent</b>        | 0.01 Cubic feet 1 folder                         |
| <b>Language</b>      | English  |
| <b>Text [Folder]</b> | S278   |

### Preferred Citation

Women's Prison and Girls' Reformatory collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library

## Historical Note

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Author Rhoda M. Coffin lived in Chicago, Illinois, at the time she wrote this article in 1902. Since 1865, she visited prisons, jails, and workhouses in the United States in order to preach the Gospel. In 1868, Indiana Governor Conrad Baker asked her and her husband, Charles F. Coffin, to visit the prisons at Jeffersonville and Michigan City, and report to him concerning needed reforms. As a result of this report, the Indiana Women's Prison and Girls' Reformatory was established with Sarah J. Smith as Superintendent and Elmina L. Johnson as Assistant. They were "both earnest Christians, women of rare executive ability." The first Board was composed of Rhoda Coffin, Adeline Roach, and Lewis Jordan.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection includes six copies of the same manuscript, written in 1902, by Rhoda M. Coffin, 3232 Groveland Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Mrs. Coffin tells about her work in preaching the Gospel along with her husband, Charles F. Coffin, in jails, workhouses, and prisons throughout the country, beginning in 1865. In the winter of 1868, Indiana Governor Conrad Baker asked her and Charles to visit the prisons at Michigan City and Jeffersonville, and make a private report to him. As a result of their investigation, the Indiana Women's Prison and Girls' Reformatory was built in Indianapolis. Mrs. Coffin, Adeline Roach, and Lewis Jordan served on the first Board. Sallie Hubbard, a murderess, was the first prisoner to enter the new facility. Sallie was welcomed by Sarah J. Smith, the first Superintendent. Sallie was among seventeen women in chains who were transferred from Jeffersonville, where the guards were all male. At the new prison, only women worked as guards. Rhoda wrote: "Both Gov. Hendricks and Gov. Williams manifested the deepest interest in the Institution and were most untiring in doing anything they could to aid us."

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## Arrangement

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This collection is arranged by subject.

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Rare Books and Manuscripts

### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Rare Books and Manuscripts.

### Custodial History

This collection was received by Rare Books and Manuscripts as a transfer from the Indiana Department of Public Welfare.

### Accruals

No further additions are expected.

### Processing Information

Collection processing and finding aid completed 2014/07/17 by Nikki Stoddard Schofield.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Geographic Name(s)

- Indianapolis (Ind.)
- Jeffersonville (Ind.)
- Michigan City (Ind.)

### **Personal Name(s)**

- Baker, Conrad (1817-1885)
- Coffin, Charles M.
- Coffin, Rhoda M.
- Johnson, Elmina L.
- Smith, Sarah J.

### **Subject(s)**

- Article
- Prison visits